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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6380  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0255  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7236  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5341  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3877  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1157  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 3950  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1156  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3034  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7824  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5480  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0288  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2176  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000933

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS AND PM  
MCC FOR D NASSIRY AND E BURKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: TIGERS ATTEMPT TO ORCHESTRATE MASSIVE  
EXPLOSION

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4(b,d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: On Friday June 29, the Sri Lanka Navy seized a truck laden with more than 1,000 kilograms of C4 explosives in the Panikkar district of Trincomalee. This find follows police confiscation on June 1 of a truck traveling towards Colombo containing 1,054 kilograms of explosives. The police have also successfully detected several claymore mines before the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) could detonate them in Colombo. Despite these successes, the LTTE detonated three claymore mines on June 29, one in the Northwest district of Mannar, one just south of Jaffna and one in Vavuniya. The Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) retaliated by bombing Tiger positions at the Omanthai checkpoint the same day. In the East, the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) reported that it is rooting Tiger cadres out of the LTTE's last remaining stronghold in Thoppigala. The LTTE loss of the East increases the likelihood that they will attempt a large scale attack on a high profile military or government target in Colombo. END SUMMARY.

MILITARY SEIZES TRUCKS LOADED WITH EXPLOSIVES  
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2. (SBU) On June 29, the Sri Lanka Navy seized a refrigerated truck in the Panikkar area of Trincomalee harbor after the Navy received a tip that the truck was loaded with more than 1,000 kilograms of C4 explosives. The driver was arrested, and the explosives, which were concealed in a consignment of fish, were confiscated. On June 1, police in Palugashandiya in the central area of Sri Lanka north of Colombo stopped a truck with 1,054 kilograms of C4 on its way to Colombo. The C4 was packed in 47 boxes and covered with coconuts to disguise the truck's contents. Both men in the truck were arrested.

3. (C) Note: In 1998, the LTTE detonated approximately 50

kilograms of C4 next to the Central bank, killing 55 people, wounding more than 300 others and causing extensive damage to the Central Bank building. Although the LTTE's specific targets are not known, simultaneous detonation of more than 1,000 kilograms of C4 would have a massive impact, whatever the target. End Note.

¶4. (SBU) The police have also found smaller stashes of C4 explosives in the past three weeks. On June 8, police recovered a 20 pound claymore mine next to a police barracks before the LTTE could detonate it. Likewise, on June 13, a civilian tipped police to the existence of a claymore mine set to explode on a railroad track in the Colombo suburb of Wellawatte. On June 26, police discovered a 20 pound claymore mine in the fuel tank of the Killinochchi Provincial Commissioner's official vehicle, which was in Colombo at the time. The Commissioner was arrested along with the two men who were caught removing the claymore mine from the fuel tank.

#### LTTE SUCCESSFULLY DETONATE SMALLER EXPLOSIONS

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¶5. (SBU) Despite the military and police forces' successes in stopping LTTE efforts to detonate explosives in Colombo, the LTTE continues to successfully set off claymore mines in other parts of Sri Lanka. On June 29, the Tigers detonated three claymore mines, wounding 11 civilians, including several children, as well as at least one soldier. At approximately 7:45 a.m. two suspected Tiger cadres dressed in civilian clothes detonated a claymore mine in Cheddikulam in the northwest district of Mannar, injuring two children and three civilians in a passing bus that shielded soldiers on

COLOMBO 00000933 002 OF 002

foot patrol next to the bus stop at the time of the explosion. Twenty minutes later, at 8:05 approximately 30 kilometers to the East in Vavuniya, a second claymore mine exploded wounding two school children and two women. At the same time, a claymore mine exploded on Chettikulam just south of Jaffna, injuring one civilian and one soldier.

#### SLA SHELLS OMANTHAI CHECKPOINT

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¶6. (SBU) In retaliation, at approximately 1:00 p.m. on the 29th, the Sri Lanka Army began shelling Tiger positions around the Omanthai checkpoint on the southern border of the Tiger-controlled Vanni with multi-barrel rocket launchers. The LTTE did not comment on casualties, but TamilNet reported that the Tigers have lodged a complaint with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) because shelling the checkpoint violates an agreement between the Sri Lanka military, the LTTE and the ICRC that civilians would be allowed to cross the Omanthai checkpoint on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

#### TIGERS SUFFER DEFEAT IN THOPPIGALA

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¶7. (C) After months of announcing that the fall of the Tigers' stronghold in Thoppigala (15 kilometers west of Batticaloa) was "imminent," the Sri Lanka Army appears to be near its goal of rooting Tiger cadres out of Thoppigala, capturing large stashes of weapons and vehicles. Although media outlets with sources close to the LTTE allege that the Tigers made a "strategic decision" to focus their military efforts in the North and abandon the East, the Tigers continued to fight in Thoppigala for months after other eastern strongholds were lost. Despite their defeat in the East, the LTTE remains capable of disrupting life there with claymore mines and other acts of terrorism.

¶8. (C) COMMENT: In the face of its losses in the East and continuous aerial bombardment in the Vanni, the LTTE seems intent on delivering a retaliatory blow to the GSL with an explosion of unprecedented size. The GSL's vigilance has

helped stop LTTE shipments of large quantities of explosives, but it is hard for any government to prevent all such shipments from getting through. All available information indicates that the LTTE would attack a government or military target or critical infrastructure. But Post will continue to monitor the threat level carefully and advise the Department of any changes.

BLAKE